

Child on Child Policy



September 2026 - 2027

Introduction

At The Flying High Academy Ladybrook, we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse including sexual violence, sexual harassment (SVSH) and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). We believe that child-on-child abuse is never acceptable and it will not be tolerated. It will never be passed off as “banter,” “just having a laugh,” “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys.” We will respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child-on-child abuse, including those that have happened outside of our school premises and/or online. We recognise that children are vulnerable to and capable of abusing their peers and we take such abuse as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. We recognise that even if there are no reports, it does not mean it is not happening- it may be the case that it is just not being reported – we understand that certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation. We acknowledge that children who have allegedly abused their peers or displayed harmful sexual behaviour are themselves vulnerable. We are committed to a whole school approach to ensure the prevention, early identification and appropriate management of child-on-child abuse within our school and beyond.

In cases where child-on-child abuse is suspected or identified we will follow our Child Protection procedures, taking a contextual, trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to support all children who have been affected by the situation, including the victim(s) (the child who has been, or the children who have been harmed) and alleged perpetrator (the child who has allegedly harmed a child or children).

Policy Development

This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) statutory guidance (1 September 2026) and has been developed in consultation with the school community.

This policy is available:

- Online on our school website
- From the school office

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year - it is updated annually.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff working with children maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here,’ and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse.

The Headteacher, Evie Scarborough, has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the Governing body, parents/carers, LA (Local Authority), and outside agencies.

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility – however, all staff, parents/carers and pupils need to be aware of who to report to and how to report any safeguarding concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Evie Scarborough and their Deputies in our school are Emma Gerrard, Georgia Archer, Kelly Rose, Lorraine Broadley, Laura Newton, Clare Wall and Jane Adams.

The nominated Governor with responsibility for child-on-child abuse is Richard Smith.

Definitions

Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-related and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)

- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos, including images that have been digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence (AI), such as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'.
- Upskirting (which is a criminal offence), which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse, or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element). This may also be an indicator of wider exploitation such as Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and/or Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and/or County Lines.

Staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other harms online as well as face to face and, in many cases, abuse may take place concurrently online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online. This may include abusive, harassing, misogynistic or misandrist messages; online bullying; threats or intimidation; impersonation or manipulation; the non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images or other explicit content; and the sharing of abusive images or pornography with those who do not wish to receive such content.

Child-on-child abuse may also involve the use of technology or generative artificial intelligence (AI) to create, alter or distribute harmful material. This includes digitally altered or wholly AI-generated sexual images, sometimes referred to as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'.

Recognising:

At The Flying High Academy Ladybrook, we recognise that behaviours associated with child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) can occur on a wide continuum. Children's sexual behaviour may range from normal and developmentally expected behaviour to behaviour that is inappropriate, problematic, abusive or violent. Understanding where a child's behaviour falls on this continuum is essential to ensuring that we respond appropriately and proportionately.

We recognise that all children grow and develop at their own pace and that behaviour must be considered within its context. When considering child-on-child abuse or harmful sexual behaviour, we will use professional judgement and knowledge of child development and consider:

- the age and developmental stage of each child
- the nature, frequency and seriousness of the behaviour
- whether there is coercion, intimidation or a power imbalance
- the effect on the child who has experienced the behaviour
- whether the behaviour is repeated or escalating
- any SEND, communication needs, trauma or other vulnerabilities
- the online and offline context
- whether other children may be at risk
- whether the behaviour indicates wider safeguarding concerns

Staff must not attempt to make specialist assessments outside their role. Concerns must be reported to the DSL or a Deputy DSL without delay so that appropriate advice, assessment and support can be obtained.

Reporting and Responding:

At The Flying High Academy Ladybrook, we want children, parents/carers, staff and visitors to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously. We recognise that our school's initial response to a report of child-on-

child abuse is incredibly important - how we respond to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims to report or come forward. As a school we will also respond to reports of alleged child-on-child abuse that have occurred online or outside of school. These reports will be treated seriously, and the school remains committed to supporting and safeguarding all parties including the victim(s) (the child who has been, or the children who have been harmed), alleged perpetrator (the child who has allegedly harmed a child or children), and any other child(ren) who may be affected.

We will make decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) taking the leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as the Local Authority, Children's Social Care and the Police as appropriate. We will ensure that we reference and follow other school policies and procedures as appropriate.

Initial Safeguarding Response

On receiving a report of child-on-child abuse or harmful sexual behaviour, the DSL or Deputy DSL will consider:

- the immediate safety and welfare of all children involved
- the child's wishes and feelings
- whether medical assistance or emergency protection is required
- whether other children may be at risk
- the need to preserve evidence
- whether parents or carers should be informed
- whether the concern can be managed within school based on the incident and information available
- whether Early Help, Family Help or specialist support is required
- whether a referral to children's social care or the police is required
- whether advice is needed from another safeguarding or specialist service

The school will not conduct a criminal investigation. Where children's social care or the police are involved, the school will agree how its safeguarding and disciplinary processes should proceed without prejudicing any external enquiries.

We have clear reporting systems for each group of our school community: the effectiveness of these reporting systems is reviewed throughout the academic year and may be expanded to meet the needs of all members of our community.

Children (including bystanders):

It is important to understand that a victim (a child who has been harmed) may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally - some children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim (a child who has been harmed) may not make a direct report. We recognise that in some instances another child may report on another child's behalf. All children will know how to report concerns or incidents of child-on-child abuse.

We ask that all children report any concerning behaviour to a member of school staff – this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, a TA, the Headteacher, a member of the play team or a member of the office team. We talk about trusted adults regularly in class, and in assemblies, to remind our children of who they can report concerns to. There are also displays around the school site, including all classrooms.

The member of staff will listen to the child and make an initial note of their concerns. They will then discuss next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported. In line with the statutory guidance provided in Keeping children safe in education, we will never promise a child that we will not tell anyone about a report of any form of abuse, as this may not be in the best interests of the child. The member of staff will report all concerns relating to child-on-child abuse or harmful sexual behaviour to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy DSL without delay. The member of staff will make a formal record of the concern/report on the school's recording system, CPOMS, in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Responding to Harmful Digital Material

Where a concern involves harmful digital material, including nude or semi-nude images, sexual content, digitally altered images, AI-generated material or other harmful online content, staff must report the concern to the DSL or a Deputy DSL without delay.

Staff must not investigate the concern themselves or intentionally view, copy, print, save or forward harmful digital material. Staff must not ask a child to show, send, download or share the material in order to evidence or verify the concern.

Where harmful material is already visible on a device, staff should not deliberately view it further or ask others to view it. Where harmful material is already visible on a device, staff should not deliberately view it further or ask others to view it. Staff should report the concern to the DSL or a Deputy DSL without delay and follow their advice regarding any further action. Staff should record what has been reported to them without copying or reproducing the harmful material. Staff should record what has been reported to them, without copying or reproducing the harmful material.

The DSL or Deputy DSL will determine the appropriate safeguarding response and seek advice from children's social care, the police or other specialist services where required. Any action taken will prioritise the safety of the children involved and the preservation of potential evidence.

We understand that some children may find it difficult to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, we therefore have additional reporting mechanisms in place. Our school has a worry box in each classroom where the child can put their name/a brief note about their concerns/draw a picture of their concern – these worry boxes are introduced to the children at the start of the year and children are reminded of them regularly. Our school also has a section on the website – I am Worried, where children can complete a form of their concerns, which is linked directly to all DSLs email addresses.

Parents/carers

We understand that parents and carers may well struggle to cope with making or receiving a report that their child has been the victim of (has been harmed) or is an alleged perpetrator (has allegedly harmed a child or children) of child-on-child abuse.

In line with the statutory guidance provided in [Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#), we will seek advice and support from other services as decided on a case-by-case basis. All decisions and actions taken by the school will consider the needs of the individual children involved, and the wider school community.

We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or allegedly perpetrating child-on-child abuse, that they contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy (in person/via telephone call/via email) to explain their concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss the concerns in detail. Following the report and/or the meeting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will make a formal record of the report on the school's recording system, CPOMS, and other relevant members of staff will be alerted.

We ask that parents/carers speak directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online.

Our school remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of child-on-child abuse. We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and ongoing investigations by statutory services. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

Parents and carers will usually be informed and involved in planning support for their child. The DSL will consider communication separately for each child involved. Parents or carers will not be informed where doing so may increase

risk, jeopardise an external enquiry, lead to the loss of evidence or otherwise be contrary to the child's best interests. Where statutory or specialist services are involved, communication with families will be agreed with them.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's Complaints Policy and procedures enclosed. This is available online from our school website and on request from the school office.

Staff

Our staff work closely with our children and therefore may notice a change in a child's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a child or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, are concerned that a child is displaying behaviours that may show they have been the victim of (are being harmed/has been harmed) or that they are perpetrating (are harming/have harmed another child or children) child-on-child abuse, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

Staff must report all concerns relating to child-on-child abuse or harmful sexual behaviour to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy DSL without delay. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the report on the school's recording system, CPOMS. CPOMS includes a specific child-on-child section, with descriptions of behaviours that may indicate this type of abuse to support staff in recording accurately. Other relevant staff members will be alerted as appropriate.

Support

Children who report or experience abuse will be listened to, taken seriously and supported. Support will be determined according to the individual child's needs and may include:

- an identified trusted adult
- a safety or support plan
- adjustments to lessons, timetables, transport or shared spaces
- pastoral, therapeutic or specialist support
- regular review and check-ins
- support with attendance, learning and wellbeing
- action to address bullying, retaliation or online fallout
- liaison with parents, carers and external services where appropriate

The child who has experienced harm should not be made to feel responsible for disruption caused by safeguarding arrangements. Any changes should be proportionate, carefully planned and reviewed with the child's needs and wishes in mind.

Children alleged to have caused harm will also receive an appropriate safeguarding response. This may include:

- assessment of their needs and circumstances
- education and support to understand the impact of their behaviour
- pastoral or specialist intervention
- safeguarding or family support
- proportionate disciplinary action
- referral to statutory or specialist services where required

Providing safeguarding support does not prevent the school from applying its Behaviour Policy. Safeguarding action and disciplinary action may take place alongside each other, provided both are fair, proportionate and coordinated with any external investigation.

Other children who have witnessed, supported, shared information about or otherwise been affected by an incident will also be considered and offered appropriate support.

Child-on-child abuse is regularly discussed with staff to ensure they can recognise the behaviours, understand how to respond appropriately, and are confident in using the school's systems to record and escalate concerns.

Visitors

We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and which staff member they should report any concerns to (the member of staff may differ depending on the purpose of the visit e.g., supply teacher, governor, external agency etc.). All Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Deputy DSLs are clearly identified to visitors when they sign in at reception.

If a visitor to our school has any concerns about child-on-child abuse, that they have witnessed or have been told about, they must report their concerns at the earliest opportunity in person to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Any concerns about child-on-child abuse must be reported without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy DSL. Where there is an immediate risk of harm, this must be reported immediately. Visitors must not wait until the end of the school day or the following day to report a safeguarding concern.

The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and this will then be passed on to the DSL or DDSL where a formal record on the school's safeguarding recording system, CPOMS, will take place. Other relevant staff members will be alerted as appropriate. However, this does not take the place of passing on the concern verbally and immediately.

Recording and evaluating:

If a child makes a disclosure or a member of staff has a safeguarding concern, a member of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) team must be informed as a matter of priority. This should always happen before any written record is made.

A written report will then be completed as soon after the disclosure as possible, recording the facts as presented by the child. These records may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated. All reports are recorded on the school's safeguarding system (e.g., CPOMS), and details of decisions made, the reasons for those decisions and any resulting outcomes will also be logged.

Risk and Needs Assessment

Where appropriate, following a report of child-on-child abuse or harmful sexual behaviour, the DSL or Deputy DSL will arrange and record an initial risk and needs assessment. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis and should consider:

- the safety and needs of the child who has experienced harm
- the needs and circumstances of the child alleged to have caused harm
- the safety of other children, including siblings, friends and witnesses
- shared lessons, activities, spaces, transport and social times
- online contact and social-media activity
- the likelihood of repetition, retaliation, bullying or wider peer-group harm
- any environmental or contextual risks
- the actions required to reduce risk and provide appropriate support

The risk and needs assessment will inform any safety or support plan required for the children involved.

In cases of sexual violence, a professional risk assessment by a social worker or sexual violence specialist may be required. The school's risk and needs assessment does not replace assessments undertaken by specialist professionals. Where professional assessments are completed, these will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting the children involved and to update the school's own assessment.

The assessment will be reviewed when new information emerges, circumstances change or agreed actions are not reducing the identified risks. Contextual and extra-familial risks will also be considered where relevant.

Safety plans will be written by a DSL, or the Child and Family Support Worker, with input from the child, their family and other agencies where necessary. Safety plans will be stored on CPOMS and reviewed in line with the plan. They will be shared with all adults closely involved with the child, including the class team, play leaders and breakfast/after-school club staff, where appropriate.

Strategies for Prevention:

Our school, The Flying High Academy Ladybrook, actively seeks to raise awareness of and prevent all forms of child-on-child abuse by:

Staff training – including for supply staff, governors, volunteers and visitors. This will include:

- All forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Contextual safeguarding ('harms outside the home' or extra-familial harm)
- Identification and classification of specific behaviours – SVSH, HSB etc.
- Making it clear there is a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse (especially in relation to SVSH) – that it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. Ensuring it is never passed off as “banter,” “just having a laugh,” “a part of growing up” or “boys being boys.” Our Anti-Bullying Policy should be referred to for guidance on how ‘banter’ is interpreted.
- Recognising, acknowledging and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening – it may be the case that it is just not being reported.
- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting-up skirts
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside of the classroom)
- Ensuring that the Governing Body are aware of their statutory safeguarding responsibilities (effective child protection policy – child-on-child abuse policy)
- Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the safeguarding lead/team so that they can spot and address any concerning trends and identify those children who may need additional support
- Training and regular updates regarding online risks, harms and technology-assisted abuse, including the misuse of generative AI, AI-generated or digitally altered harmful content, deepfakes and deep nudes, with appropriate signposting to further support and advice.
- Training staff to recognise vulnerable groups (e.g., children with SEND, children in care, LGBTQ+ pupils) and understand how risks may be heightened for them

Information for children (pupils/students) – this includes:

- Creating an ethos and culture in which all children feel able to share their concerns openly, in a non-judgemental environment and have them listened to
- All children are frequently told what to do if they witness or experience any form of child-on-child abuse, the effect that it can have on those who experience it and the possible reasons for it
- They are regularly informed about the school’s approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including the zero-tolerance stance, the process for reporting concerns and where to go for further help, support and advice
- Educating all children about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via a well-embedded RHE/RSHE curriculum, PSHE curriculum and wider curriculum opportunities
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie such abuse (both inside and outside of the classroom)
- Teaching age-appropriate information regarding online risks, harms and technology-assisted abuse, including the safe and responsible use of technology, AI-generated or digitally altered content and how to recognise and report harmful online behaviour, with appropriate signposting to further support and advice.
- Providing opportunities for pupil voice, including through the school council, safeguarding ambassadors, surveys, worry boxes and a safeguarding link on the school website, so children can help shape how the school addresses these issues

- Encouraging pupils to be active bystanders (“upstanders”), learning how to safely challenge or report concerning behaviour

Information for parents/carers – engagement with parents/carers includes:

- Talking to parents, both in groups and one-to-one
- Providing opportunities for parents to be involved in the review of school policies and lesson plans and encouraging parents to hold the school to account on this issue
- Asking parents what they perceive to be the risks facing their child and how they would like to see the school address those risks
- Challenging the attitudes that underlie child-on-child abuse – in school and/or the wider community
- Ensuring parents/carers are aware of the ethos and culture of the school
- Sharing regular information regarding online risks, harms and technology-assisted abuse, including emerging risks associated with social media, online content and artificial intelligence and signposting parents/carers to appropriate support and advice.
- Engaging parents in conversations about vulnerable groups and how the school supports them

Relationships Education / RSHE / PSHE Curriculum–

- The school has a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life, which is supported by a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE curriculum
- Our RHE/RSHE/PSHE programme is fully inclusive and developed to be age- and stage-appropriate, especially when considering children with SEND and/or other vulnerabilities

We will, through our RHE/RSHE/PSHE programme, promote:

- Healthy, respectful, and kind friendships and relationships
- Boundaries and consent
- Equality and raising awareness of stereotyping and prejudice
- Respectful behaviour, including recognising and challenging prejudice, discrimination, misogyny, misandry and harmful gender stereotypes in an age-appropriate way
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- How to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- Age-appropriate learning about boundaries, privacy, consent, safe and unsafe relationships, grooming, exploitation, abuse and harassment, including how and where to seek help
- What constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable

Supervision, environment and culture –

- Staff presence and visibility in identified “hotspot” areas such as corridors, playgrounds, toilets and other less supervised spaces
- Regular review of safeguarding data to identify patterns, themes, or areas of concern in the school environment and online
- Safeguarding displays, assemblies, and campaigns to keep messages visible and reinforce whole-school culture

Monitoring, evaluation, and governance –

- The DSL team and governors regularly monitor incidents and safeguarding records to identify trends and evaluate the effectiveness of prevention work
- The DSL and senior leaders will review significant incidents and patterns to identify whether changes are required to policies, staff training, behaviour expectations, reporting systems, curriculum, supervision, online safety or pastoral support.
- Policy and practice are reviewed annually and updated in line with statutory guidance, pupil feedback and emerging risks

Breaches / Complaints:

Breaches to this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Headteacher and Governing Body.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's Complaints Policy and procedures included within. This is available online from our school website, and on request from the school office.

Links with other policies:

You may find it helpful to read this child-on-child abuse policy alongside the other following school policies:

Policy	How it may link
Child Protection Policy	Includes information about child protection procedures and contextualised safeguarding
Relationship and Positive Behaviour Policy	Includes details about the school's behaviour system and how restorative and relational approaches are used to respond to incidents
Anti-Bullying policy	Includes information about bullying behaviours and vulnerable groups
Online Safety / E-Safety / Acceptable Use Policies	Includes information about children's online behaviour and details about online bullying/cyberbullying
Equality Policy	Includes information about our school's approach to tackling prejudice and celebrating differences. Links to prejudice-related language and crime and the protected characteristics
RSE Policy	Includes information about our school's RSHE programme and how we teach about healthy relationships, friendships, and bullying
Complaints Policy	Includes information about how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the school's response

Further information and support can be found through the following links:

- Part 5: Child-on-child sexual harassment and sexual violence (pages 123-154) of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) - [Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#)
- Definitions - [Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#)
- Simon Hackett (2010) Continuum model of sexual behaviours -
 - [Sexual development and behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning](#)
 - [NSPCC Learning Understanding sexualised behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning](#)
- [Shore Space](#) – Lucy Faithful Foundation, confidential service supporting young people concerned about their own or someone else's sexual thoughts and behaviours

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year. It is updated annually.

Date approved by the Governing Body: 01.09.26

Date to be reviewed: September 2027